(135)

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Department of State

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 HA-05 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /036 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7266

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 1556

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/1/86 (CHEEK, JAMES R.) OR-M
TAGS: PGOV PINT SHUM ES
SUBJ: REPLY TO ARCHBISHOP'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER

REF: CHEEK/WILSON SECURE TELCON 3/1/80

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. FOLLOWING IS OUR REVISED TEXT OF REPLY TO ARCHBISHOP'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER. BEGIN TEXT.

DEAR ARCHBISHOP ROMERO:

THE PRESIDENT HAS ASKED THAT I RESPOND TO YOUR LETTER OF FEBRUARY 17 REGARDING THE SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR AND EXPRESSING YOUR FRANK VIEWS ON UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO THE REVOLUTIONARY JUNTA OF GOVERNMENT. WE ARE PLEASED TO SEE CONFIRMED THAT YOU AND THE PRESIDENT HAVE MANY GOALS AND CONCERNS IN COMMON. AS YOU NOTE, THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAS BEEN AND REMAINS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FOREIGN POLICY GOALS OF OUR GOVERNMENT AND I ASSURE YOU THAT IT UNDERLIES EVERY ASPECT OF UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD EL SALVADOR.

THE REVOLUTIONARY JUNTA OF GOVERNMENT HAS SHOWN ITSELF TO BE MODERATE AND REFORMIST. THE UNITED STATES, DEDICATED BY TRADITION AND LONG PRACTICE TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, IS ANXIOUS ABOUT EL SALVADOR'S GRAVE POLITICAL CRISIS AND STANDS READY TO CONTRIBUTE TO PEACEFUL AND PROGRESSIVE SOLUTIONS. WE BELIEVE THE REFORM PROGRAM OF THE REVOLUTIONARY JUNTA OF GOVERNMENT OFFERS THE BEST PROSPECT FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE TOWARD A MORE JUST SOCIETY. WE THEREFORE HAVE RESPONDED TO THE JUNTA'S REQUEST FOR OUR ASSISTANCE TO HELP CARRY OUT ITS GOALS.

THE VAST BULK OF OUR CONTEMPLATED ASSISTANCE IN SUPPORT OF THE JUNTA'S REFORM PROGRAM IS ECONOMIC. WE PLAN TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE JUNTA THIS YEAR APPROXIMATELY $58 MILLION OF URGENTLY NEEDED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE THAT WILL BE DIRECTED TOWARD THE MOST NEEDY TO CREATE PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYMENT, TO FEED THE HUNGRY, TO IMPROVE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HOUSING, AND TO SUPPORT THE AGRARIAN AND OTHER REFORMS.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR WARNINGS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF PROVIDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE GIVEN THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF THE SECURITY FORCES IN EL SALVADOR. AS WE CONSIDER ANY REQUEST FOR SUCH ASSISTANCE, I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT WHATEVER MILITARY ASSISTANCE MAY BE PROVIDED WILL BE DIRECTED AT HELPING THE GOVERNMENT TO BREAK WITH THIS TRADITION AND TO DEFEND AND CARRY FORWARD ITS ANNOUNCED PROGRAM OF REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT. WE ARE AS CONCERNED AS YOU THAT ANY ASSISTANCE WE PROVIDE NOT BE USED IN A REPRESSIVE MANNER. THEREFORE, ANY EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING WHICH WE MIGHT PROVIDE WOULD BE DESIGNED TO OVERCOME THE MOST SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES OF THE ARMED FORCES, ENHANCING THEIR PROFESSIONALISM SO THAT THEY CAN FULFILL THEIR ESSENTIAL ROLE OF MAINTAINING ORDER WITH A MINIMUM OF LETHAL FORCE.

I BELIEVE THERE IS NO REAL CONTRADICTION BETWEEN PROPER LAW ENFORCEMENT AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. I WILL USE OUR INFLUENCE TO AVERT ANY MISUSE OF OUR ASSISTANCE IN WAYS THAT INJURE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR AND WILL PROMPTLY REASSESS OUR ASSISTANCE SHOULD EVIDENCE OF SUCH MISUSE DEVELOP. HOWEVER, WE HOPE YOU WILL AGREE THAT A LESS CONFRONTATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE KIND OF MEANINGFUL REFORM PROGRAM YOU HAVE LONG ADVOCATED.

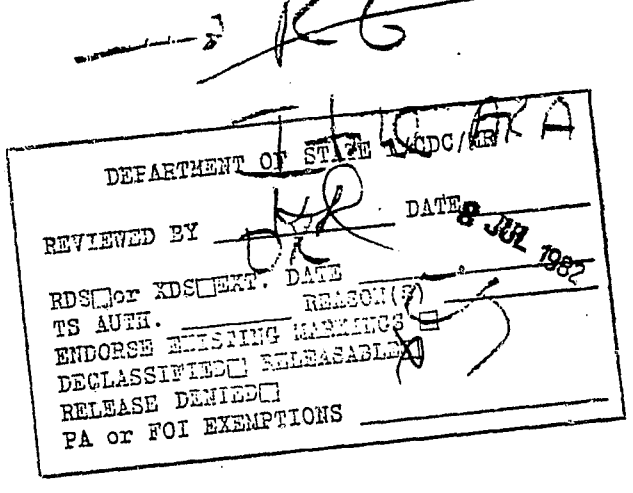
I THANK YOU SHARING YOUR CONCERNS WITH US AND ASSURE YOU THAT YOUR VIEWS ARE BEING GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. I BELIEVE THAT WE ARE ALL COMMITTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. WE SHARE A REPUGNANCE FOR THE VIOLENCE PROVOKED BY BOTH EXTREMES THAT IS TAKING THE LIVES OF INNOCENT PEOPLE. WE DEPLORE THE EFFORTS OF THOSE SEEKING TO SILENCE THE VOICES OF REASON AND MODERATION WITH EXPLOSIVES, INTIMIDATION, AND MURDER. THE GREAT MORAL AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH, AND YOUR UNCOMPROMISING DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEDICATION TO NON-VIOLENCE CONVINCE ME THAT OUR SHARED VALUES CAN BE THE BASIS OF A COOPERATIVE EFFORT IN SEARCH OF PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS.

THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF EL SALVADOR. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE GRAVELY CONCERNED THAT THE THREAT OF CIVIL WAR IN YOUR COUNTRY COULD ENDANGER THE SECURITY AND WELL-BEING OF THE WHOLE CENTRAL AMERICAN REGION. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO RESPOND TO THE LEGITIMATE REQUESTS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY JUNTA OF GOVERNMENT IN ITS EFFORTS TO CORRECT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND PROMOTE RESPECT FOR DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

I WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS IN CARRYING OUT YOUR HEAVY PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE NEW DEMANDS THAT THE THREAT OF CIVIL WAR HAS IMPOSED UPON YOU. YOU HAVE A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY IN HELPING YOUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN FIND PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO THEIR PROBLEMS. MAY GOD GIVE YOU WISDOM AND STRENGTH IN THIS DIFFICULT TASK.

SINCERELY, CYRUS VANCE

END TEXT
CHEEK



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